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|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Notice of Allowability | Application No. | Applicant(s) | |
| | 09/475,991 | SAKAI ET AL. | |
| | Examiner | Art Unit | |
| | Jon Chang | 2623 | |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. This communication is responsive to 7/19/04.
2. The allowed claim(s) is/are 2-11, 13-40 (renumbered as 1-38).
3. The drawings filed on 30 December 1999 and 21 July 2003 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some* c) None of the:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

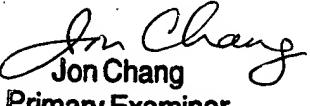
Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
6. CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) hereto or 2) to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____.
7. Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. Other _____.


Jon Chang
 Primary Examiner

Response to Applicants' Amendment and Arguments

1. The amendment filed July 19, 2004, has been entered and made of record.

In response to the amendment, the objection to claim 38 due to informalities, and the rejections of claim 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 are withdrawn.

Reasons for Allowance

2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Claim 13 requires detecting character regions whose matching degrees are high by making comparisons between positions and sizes of the regions. As is apparent from various Office Actions, while the prior art of record teaches making comparisons between positions of the character regions, it does not teach making a comparison between sizes of the regions. Claims 2 and 36 have a similar recitation. Claims 3, 14, 17, 29 and 37 have a similar recitation, detecting overlapping based in part the comparison between positions and sizes of the character regions. Claims 4-11 depend from claim 2, and claims 30-31 depend from claim 29.

Claim 15 requires comparing between the number of line image containing only character images in the plurality of regions vertically partitioned and the number of such line image found in the plurality of regions horizontally partitioned, and judging the plurality of regions that hold more line image found to contain only character images as a low graphic-ratio region. The prior art of record does not teach or suggest this limitation. Claims 16, 32, 33, 34, 35, 38, 39 and 40 recite analogous limitations. Claims 18-28 depend from claim 15.

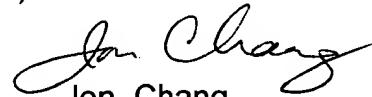
Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Contact Information

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jon Chang whose telephone number is (703)305-8439. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Amelia Au can be reached on (703)308-6604. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Jon Chang
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2623

Jon Chang
December 1, 2004